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## ABSTRACT

The 1954 "Brown v. Board of Education" decision laid the basis for dismantling de jure racial segregation of schools and resulted in a 50 percent reduction in the number of schools in which black students composed 90 to 100 percent of the enrollment between 1968 and 1980. "Brown" represented a significant shift in the national attitude toward blacks and was an important advance in intergroup relations. However, in the last decade the proportion of black students enrolled in many large educationally deficient urban schools has been rising, resulting in racial isolation and de facto segregation. Desegregation appears to have resulted in a small improvement in black students' reading skills but no significant change in their mathematics skills. Some evidence has begun to accumulate indicating that desegregation may break a generational cycle of segregation and racial isolation by influencing such important adult outcomes as college graduation, income, and employment patterns, but the measured effects are weak and appear to be dependent upon sex and geographic region. Studies of the effect of desegregation on intergroup attitudes are generally inconclusive and inconsistent; and no studies have focused on changes in intergroup behavior, despite indications that desegregated schooling can provide students with valuable behavioral experience that prepares them to function in a pluralistic society. School desegregation policies and practices can also have marked and predictable effects on intergroup relations. A list of 186 references is appended. (FMW)

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## Review of Research on School Desegregation's Impact on Black Americans

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## A Brief Historical Overview

The history of black-white contact in the United States is long and complex. However the last thirty years have seen changes in relations between blacks and whites of a magnitude virtually unparalleled in that long history, except for the period after the Civil War which saw the end of slavery as a legal institution. One of the most controversial of these changes was the decision handed down in the Brown v Board of Education case in 1954. In that decision, the United States Supreme Court overturned the earlier doctrine, propounded in Plessy v Ferguson in 1896, that "separate but equal" public facilities for blacks and whites could be mandated by state law. Instead, it argued that such separation in the schools "generates a feeling of inferiority (in black children) that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." (347 U.S. at 494). Thus, enforced segregation of the schools by race was held to violate the equal protection clause of the United States Constitution (Read, 1975; Wisdom, 1975) and to provide an inherently unequal education for black and white children.

The Brown decision and later attempts to implement it raised a storm of controversy. The controversial nature of the decision is indicated by the fact that the Supreme Court did not order its immediate enforcement. Rather, it wanted a year to hear arguments on how school segregation should be ended. Then, compounding the delay, it handed down Brown II in 1955 which did not require an immediate end to state enforced segregation. Instead, it ordered that students be admitted to schools on a racially nondiscriminatory basis "with all deliberate speed." In the South, which was the region of the country most clearly affected by Brown initially, anti-black organizations like the Ku Klux Klan and White Citizens' Councils gained new strength. Over 100 southern senators and congressional representatives signed a statement declaring the Supreme Court's decision "contrary to established law" (Bergman, 1969, p. 555).

In the face of widespread public opposition, desegregation progressed almost exclusively because of actual or threatened lawsuits. Thus the NAACP-Legal Defense Fund, which had been active in bringing segregation cases to court for 25 years before it won the Brown decision, now had to challenge both inaction in the face of the Supreme Court's decision and school board strategies, such as tuition payments and even the

closing of schools, designed to avoid desegregation. The extent of resistance to the Brown decision and the Herculean dimensions of the task of overcoming this resistance are made clear by the fact that 99% of the black children in the U.S. were still in segregated schools ten years after the Supreme Court ruling (Edelman, 1973).

Change of any real magnitude began in 1965 after the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. These two acts jointly had marked influence. The first allowed the federal government to withhold funds to school districts which had not complied with Brown. The second greatly increased federal funding for public schools and thus gave the threat of a cutoff some practical meaning. Other societal changes, too, helped finally to get things moving. Urban riots combined with highly visible and more traditional protest activities on the part of black civil rights activists and their white allies created an atmosphere in which public awareness of civil rights issues and the fragility of the status quo was greatly heightened. Undoubtedly connected with this was a vastly increased flow of private funds into civil rights and related activities. For example, contributions from foundations for race-related issues shot from 2.3 million a year in 1964 to almost 27 million in 1967 (Feagin, 1980).

The period in which large numbers of black children shifted from segregated to desegregated schools lasted roughly from 1965 to 1972. Virtually all of this change occurred in the South, which is hardly surprising given that a great many Southern states had state supported dual systems of the kind specifically dealt with in the Brown decision. The magnitude of the change is indicated by the fact that in 1968 only 18% of all black students in the South were in predominately white schools, whereas by 1972 44% were (Feagin, 1980). In sharp contrast, the proportion of black students in predominately all white schools in the North and West during that time period shifted almost imperceptibly in the direction of more racial isolation from 28% to 29% (Feagin, 1980).

These trends foreshadow more recent ones. Whereas desegregation continued in the decade after 1972 in the southern and border states, the rate of change showed

dramatically. More than half of the black children in these states still attend majority black schools (Rist, 1980). In the North and West, racial isolation has tended to increase somewhat with over 80% of all black students now attending majority black schools (Rist, 1980). The increase in racial isolation in the the North and West tends to stem from population patterns in major urban centers like Chicago, Los Angeles, and Detroit. A variety of factors including differential birth rates, differential usage of private schools, and the differential flow of white and black families to the suburbs has led to increasing racial isolation in the schools. Chicago is a case in point, although perhaps an extreme one. In 1970, 74% of the black children in the city's public schools were in schools with 99-100% minority enrollment. By 1974, the proportion was 80% (Rist, 1980). Orfield et al. (1984, p. 100) reports more recently that Chicago's high schools are "becoming steadily more heavily minority and poorer."

In summary, the blatantly dual school systems in the South which provoked the Brown decision have been dismantled. Further, national statistics show that the proportion of blacks in 90-100% minority schools was cut almost in half between 1968 and 1980 (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1982). On the other hand, millions of black children remain locked in racially isolated schools and there is reason to believe that a great many of these schools are poorer educational institutions than those which serve white students. The disparities are not as glaring as in the pre-Brown days when, for example, the average yearly expenditure for the schooling of a white child in Mississippi was nine times that for a black child (Thompson, 1975). However, they often still exist (Feagin, 1980). For example, Orfield et al.'s (1984, p. 117) recent intensive study of the Chicago school system found that the Chicago high schools with the highest proportion of minority students tend to have less adequate curricula, larger classes, less well prepared teachers and counselors, and less access to college entrance exams than do the system's other schools.

### **The Changing Nature of the Issues**

#### **De jure vs de facto segregation**

The Brown decision was based on cases with the kind of state mandated dual

school systems prevalent in the South in the first half of this century -- a situation often referred to as de jure segregation. Such legally supported dual school systems were not typical of other parts of the country which tended to be characterized by de facto segregation -- i.e. a situation in which racial imbalance exists in the schools as a result of factors other than government action. Once enforcement efforts began in the mid 1960's, progress in wiping out the sort of de jure segregation found in the South was fairly rapid, as indicated earlier.

However, in the early 1970's when desegregation cases began to be brought in the North and West the issues became considerably more complex. Since the legal basis for desegregation requires proof of discriminatory government action, instead of merely establishing the existence of legally mandated segregation by pointing to the existence of certain statutes plaintiffs had to show how governmental action had contributed to the segregation of schools in situations in which a whole host of other factors led to widespread de facto segregation of neighborhoods. Furthermore, the Washington v Davis decision, handed down in 1976, said that the constitutional violation of racial discrimination requires a racially discriminatory purpose. It went on to quote an earlier decision stating that the "differentiating factor between de jure segregation and so-called de facto segregation is in purpose or intent to segregate (Graglia, 1980, p. 91). Thus, it is not racial imbalance itself which is unconstitutional according to Brown and subsequent decisions, but purposeful state action designed to discriminate on the basis of race.

It is clear that school board and other governmental action was deeply involved in segregating schools in many situations where de facto residential segregation already existed. For example, decisions about how to draw the boundaries for neighborhood schools and where to build new schools were often made in ways which obviously increased school segregation and which had no other apparent rationale. However, proof of discriminatory intent and effect is clearly more difficult here than in the clear dual system case. Also, determining the portion of segregation which is due to intentional governmental action relative to that which arises from other causes, and hence is not subject to legal remedy, is an expensive, time-consuming, and difficult task. Finally, in



many of the largest Northern cities where de facto segregation is quite extreme, the proportion of white students is so low that even if they were evenly distributed throughout the system the proportion in each school would be quite low. Thus desegregation of many cities in which blacks constitute a majority in many of the schools may actually lead to relatively little change in the schools to which blacks are assigned or to the racial composition thereof. The one major factor which might change this situation dramatically is, of course, the possibility of metropolitan desegregation remedies whereby school systems in heavily black core cities would be merged with the heavily white suburban systems which often form a ring around them. However, the Milliken v Bradley decision in 1974 in which the Supreme Court overturned a district court's order that the heavily black Detroit system be consolidated with 53 heavily white surrounding districts has set the tone for the past decade or more. Thus the probability for metropolitan desegregation plans seems low in the foreseeable future.

#### Public Opinion Regarding School Desegregation

The last forty years have seen a dramatic change in the attitudes that whites express toward school desegregation in response to public opinion polls. Orfield has summed up the situation as follows (1978, p. 108):

Increasing support for integrated schools has been a clear pattern in successive studies of public opinion over the decades. Three decades of surveys by the National Opinion Research Center showed remarkable growth of a consensus supporting integrated schools between 1942 and 1970.

Research conducted since 1970 shows a continuation of this trend (Greeley, 1980). Furthermore, Greeley (1980) demonstrates that the widespread perception that there has been a "white backlash" in attitudes about school desegregation, especially among white ethnic groups, is at variance with the evidence. Specifically, he cites data gathered in 1970, 1972 and 1974 by the NORC General Social Survey which shows increasing acceptance of integration in virtually all groups. Roughly 75-85% of the respondents in all eleven ethnic groups studied, ranging from British Protestants to Irish Catholics,



Jews, and Hispanics, indicated that they would send their children to a school which was half black. This is in clear contrast to data gathered in 1959 which showed that 83% of Southern white parents and 34% of their Northern counterparts would object to such a situation. It is important to point out as the preceding statistics suggest that change has been much greater in the South where desegregation has been more extensive than the North. Orfield's (1978) data show a relatively minor increase of 10% in the proportion of Northern white parents saying they would accept a half black school from 1959 to 1975 compared to a 45% increase for white Southern parents.

Although it is clear that white public opinion has altered dramatically, there is some ambiguity about the meaning and importance of this change. First, it is at least possible that changes in the social climate have influenced survey responses with respondents now being more hesitant to express attitudes which might label them as racist. Thus, the change may be more apparent than real. McConahay & Hough's (1976) work on symbolic racism and Gaertner and Dovidio's (1986) work on aversive racism suggests that this is a possibility. Secondly, although whites now generally seem to endorse desegregated schools in principal, it is important to recognize that they also express strong opposition to busing, which in many situations is the only or the most practical way to achieve desegregation. For example, the same study which concluded that members of white ethnic groups basically accept school desegregation also concluded that only a small minority of the members of all these groups support busing. Specifically, only about ten to fifteen percent of each of the 10 white ethnic groups surveyed reported that they were in favor of busing (Greeley, 1980). These data are roughly consistent with the fact that several national surveys conducted in the 1970's found that between 70 and 85% of all whites opposed busing for the purposes of desegregation (Armor, 1980). Ironically, this is roughly the same proportion who purportedly favor school desegregation as previously indicated.

The most obvious explanation for this discrepancy is the idea that whereas whites may hesitate to appear prejudiced by opposing school desegregation they feel free to object to busing where this objection can be attributed to other motives, like safety or cost concerns. However, a number of studies have suggested that the situation is not this

simple. For example, Stinchcombe and Taylor (1980) found no correlation of any magnitude between attitudes toward busing and attitudes towards other measures of support for racial integration in a study conducted in Boston. Furthermore, resistance to busing is hardly restricted to the white community. Although blacks in general appear more favorable toward both desegregation and busing than whites, they show a pattern much like whites -- a much higher proportion favor desegregation than busing. For example, although a national poll in 1969 concluded that nearly 80% of the black populace favored racially mixed schools (Pettigrew, Useem, Normand and Smith, 1973), only about 50% of the black Americans surveyed in 3 national polls in the early 1970's favored busing (Hamilton, 1973). A more recent poll found that 38% of American blacks favored busing for desegregation whereas 50 percent opposed it (Rist, 1980). Thus, the discrepancy between survey results on desegregation and busing which is apparent in public opinion surveys with whites can hardly be attributed entirely to their desire to avoid black classmates for their children.

On the other hand, it is clear that busing is really only an issue when it is conducted for purposes of racial balance. More than 50% of all students in public elementary and secondary schools ride buses to school each day. Objections to busing for racial balance based on the cost also seem somewhat spurious. More than fifteen states provide free busing to private religious schools. Students in the private "segregation academies" in the South require more busing than those in public schools. Seven percent of all busing expenditures are for extra-curricular activities. Except in the 7% of the cases where the busing is related to school desegregation, it is a widely accepted and almost completely non-controversial practice (National Institute of Education, 1976).

Just as white public opinion about desegregation and related issues has changed over the years, so too there has been at least some change in the opinion of black Americans. There appears to be general agreement that at the same time whites have become more willing to indicate acceptance of desegregation in response to public opinion polls, blacks may have become somewhat less positive toward the idea of vigorously pursuing school desegregation (Fliss, 1975; Rist, 1980). Specifically, survey

data suggest that blacks as a group remain more in favor of desegregation than whites (Rist, 1980; other refs too). However, the past ten to fifteen years have seen many highly visible blacks raising serious questions about desegregation. In the early 1970's, leaders of the community control movement argued that black schools controlled by blacks would do a better job of educating black students than desegregated schools embedded in systems where whites predominate in positions of power and influence. The 'Atlanta Compromise' in 1973 emerged out of a line of thought similar, although not identical, to this. Specifically the NAACP agreed to stop pressing for widespread busing to achieve racial balance in exchange for limited pupil desegregation, full faculty and staff desegregation, and the School Board's acceptance of a commitment to hire a substantial number of blacks for important administrative positions, including that of superintendent. Although some of the plaintiffs and numerous civil rights groups objected to this compromise, several thousand blacks signed a petition in its favor which they submitted to the court. (Bell, 1975). Secondly, many blacks have been offended by a racist assumption behind many calls for integration -- that black children are unable to learn or learn well unless they are around white children who can model this behavior for them. Roy Innes, Director of the Congress of Racial Equality, originated a resolution adopted at the National Black Political Convention in Gary Indiana which called school desegregation a "bankrupt, suicidal method... based on the false notion that black children are unable to learn unless they are in the same setting as white children" (New York Times, March 13, 1972, p. 30, col. 4).

Still other blacks, both prominent leaders and rank and file parents, have pointed out as we will discuss shortly that the burdens of desegregation have fallen disproportionately on blacks. For example Derrick Bell (1975) points out that in an effort to placate white parents as much as possible, courts have permitted school boards to close black schools and to allow "one-way" busing which leaves white students in neighborhood schools while requiring black children to be bused to achieve racial balance. To the extent that these burdens are insulting, costly, or have educationally negative consequences, the overall potential utility of desegregation is diminished. Such considerations, combined with present court decisions on metropolitanization and population trends in many parts of the country which make the continuing existence of

racial isolation in many schools almost inevitable have led such eminent blacks as Dr. Benjamin Mays and Dr. Kenneth Clark to argue that blacks must focus on the issue of the quality of the education that black children receive rather than putting all their emphasis on achieving the goal of immediate desegregation (Bell, 1975).

### Who Pays the Price?

Virtually any major social change involves some costs, be they financial or otherwise. The issue of precisely how to implement desegregation, and the inextricably linked issue of who would bear the burden of its costs, has been salient from 1954 when the Supreme Court decided to postpone a decision on implementation for a year after it handed down its basic decision. However, only as desegregation has taken place has it become clear that blacks have quite consistently been asked relatively to tolerate a disproportionate share of the burden of desegregating American schools. At one level, this is hardly surprising. White Americans are a substantial numerical majority with power and financial resources greatly disproportionate to even their large numbers. Thus, the tendency has been to implement desegregation in ways which they find most acceptable (Bell, 1975). School desegregation is often seen by whites as an accommodation to black's desires and as a cost in and of itself, rather than an obligation flowing from a constitutional principle. Thus many whites feel unfairly put on when asked or required to participate in a desegregation plan and feel that blacks, whom they see as benefiting from it, should be willing to shoulder the major part of the burden. Many blacks, of course, see this as a specious and pernicious stance which asks the victims of past discrimination to accept present day discrimination, and to perhaps even feel grateful since the present day discrimination is more subtle than yesterday's dual school system or Jim Crow laws.

A brief example should suffice to reinforce the point that desegregation has tended to be implemented in a way which reflects white rather than black interests. One of the most glaring examples of this was the treatment of black educators in desegregating systems in the South. The Supreme Court recognized that establishing a unitary school system required the desegregation of faculty and staff well before a great deal of

The Keyes decision has important implications, especially given the rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the U.S. A number of important social trends, including a decline in the U.S. birth rate and the rapid growth of illegal immigration, have combined to result in the fact that one in twelve children born in 1975 in the U.S. was Hispanic. In a number of states Hispanics now constitute over 15% of the population (Orfield, 1978). Indeed, if current trends continue, Hispanics may well become the largest minority group in the U.S. Many Hispanics are concentrated in cities like Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles which also have large numbers of blacks. Thus their presence greatly effects the shape of any desegregation which might occur in these areas. In addition, Hispanics typically have special concerns, most notably those about the treatment of children for whom English is a second language, which are not issues for most blacks. In fact, for many Hispanics concern over bilingual-bicultural education far outweighs concern about desegregation (Orfield, 1978). The impetus for desegregation usually comes from minority parents who are concerned about their children's education. Thus, the presence of a large Hispanic population which may fear, quite rightly, that dispersion of Hispanic students throughout the school system will weaken the special language programs which they want for their children can create competing interests between these major minority groups.

### Resegregation

Although a tremendous amount of public attention has been given to the issue of desegregation, much less has been given to a phenomenon which frequently follows on its heels quite quickly, that of resegregation within the desegregated school (Desegregation Studies Unit, 1977). For example, Cohen (1975) reported in her review of the literature on desegregation and intergroup relations that only one-fifth of the studies done between 1968 and 1974 reported on whether there was actual interracial contact in the schools studied. Yet it is clear that resegregation frequently occurs. Sometimes it is quite extreme. For example, interviews with students in a previously white Southern high school which was desegregated as the result of a court order found them saying things like "All the segregation in the city was put in one building (Collins & Noblit, 1977). Indeed, the resegregation was so strong that the authors of the study spoke of "two

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schools within a school" (Collins & Noblit, 1977).

Resegregation can stem from several sources. The most obvious sources are traditional school practices with regard to ability grouping and tracking. A number of studies report that from one-half to three-quarters of all elementary schools assign students to classrooms on the basis of their perceived ability (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1974; Findley & Bryan, 1975; Mills and Bryan, 1976; Epstein, 1985). Furthermore, a very large proportion of elementary schools use within class ability grouping, either instead of or in addition to the between class grouping (Epstein, 1985). High schools also tend to group by ability. Frequently, they use a fairly rigid system of tracks, in which students of different measured ability levels take very different curricula which, for example, either prepare them for college or provide them with vocational training. Ability grouping and tracking clearly segregate students by both social class and race. Poor and minority children are disproportionately assigned to the lower levels (Findley & Bryan, 1971; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1974).

There appears to be little hard evidence that ability grouping and tracking are generally adopted in desegregated schools in order to resegregate students (Eyler, Cook & Ward, 1983). After all, they are widespread practices in many single race schools. However, there are indications that decisions about tracking and ability grouping are influenced by racial considerations. For example, Epstein's (1985) analysis of data from 94 elementary schools concludes that ability grouping is used most frequently by teachers in southern schools and by those with negative attitudes toward integrated education. Also, Gerard and Miller (1975) found that low teacher prejudice is associated with the use of teaching techniques which encourage interracial contact.

Resegregation is also fostered by other widespread school programs and practices such as compensatory education, special education, and disciplinary practices. The question of how the legitimate needs met by such programs and practices can best be filled while minimizing their resegregative impact is a difficult one which has received attention elsewhere (Desegregation Studies Unit, 1977; Epstein, 1985; Eyler, Cook & Ward, 1983).



Finally, much informal resegregation seems to stem from the students' own initiative. Such apparently spontaneous resegregation in social situations is often influenced by school policies in subtle ways of which school faculty and administrators are not aware (Schofield, 1979; Schofield & Sagar, 1979). For example, such apparently simple things as whether students are assigned to seats alphabetically or choose their own seats appears to influence substantially the amount of cross-race socializing which occurs in classes (Schofield, 1982). Nonetheless, it is also true that even when teachers or schools make an effort to promote intergroup contact, many students resist out of anxiety, fear of rebuff, or concern about peer pressure (Schofield, 1982).

### White Flight

Although the kind of issues mentioned above can and sometime do lead to substantial resegregation within desegregated schools, they have received relatively little public attention. In sharp contrast, the issue of white flight, another potential source of resegregation, has been at the center of heated public as well as scholarly controversy in the past fifteen years. The term white flight, as it is generally used by researchers in the area, refers to "any loss of White students from a desegregating school district -- whether by residential relocation, transferring to private schools, or residential avoidance -- that can reasonably be attributed to desegregation itself" (Armor, 1980, p. 188).

Research on this topic suggests that a number of characteristics of the school districts involved and of the desegregation plan itself influence the amount of white flight which occurs. For example, reviews of research in this area by Rossell (1983) and Armor (1980), scholars who have generally quite different stances towards the issue of desegregation, both conclude that the greater the proportion black in a district and the greater the desegregation the more white flight there will be. In addition, they agree that white reassignment to previously black schools results in substantially more white flight than black reassignment to white schools. Another consistent finding is that white flight is greatest in central-city districts surrounded by white suburbs and less in large metropolitan school districts. A final important point of agreement is that white flight occurs markedly more in the first year of desegregation than in subsequent years.

Unfortunately, there is real disagreement over the likely long term effects of white flight on the ability of a desegregated school system to keep its white as well as its black clientele. Rossell (1983) concluded that the long-term effect of school desegregation on white flight in countywide and suburban districts is neutral or even positive because initial losses of whites from the school are compensated for by later gains in retention. Armor (1980), who focuses his analysis on situations in which white flight is highest (heavily black center city districts ringed by suburbs), concludes that white flight is so substantial that an important degree of resegregation is highly likely. He is also markedly less optimistic than Rossell about the impact of metropolitan plans. Three factors need to be kept in mind, however, when interpreting Armor's (1980) research. First, as just mentioned, much of it is focused on the cases where white flight is likely to be greatest. Second, he assumes that when the percent white in a district falls below 50%, its minority students can no longer be said to be desegregated, thus equating desegregated schools with a majority white schools. This seems to me a questionable definition of desegregation. Third, Rossell's (1983) review suggests that much of the white flight that does occur is flight to private schools rather than residential relocation. This conclusion has important implications for interpreting the likely effect of white flight on residential patterns, the tax base in central cities, and the like.

## **Problems in Assessing the Effects of School Desegregation**

### **Deciding on the Relevant Studies**

An attempt to assess definitively the impact of school desegregation is limited by several factors. First, as indicated previously, most of the actual implementation of school desegregation plans occurred in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Thus any review which limited itself to examining the impact of such court-ordered plans would of necessity depend heavily on data which is two or more decades old. Although this task might be of interest from a historical standpoint, its implications for the present and the future would be far from clear. The economic and social position of blacks in American society has changed substantially in this time period. So have the attitudes and behavior of at least a significant number of white Americans. There are a great many studies of the impact of interracial schooling which have implications for understanding certain

aspects of school desegregation which are not studies of the desegregation per se. Although this review will attempt to focus on the impact of desegregation as it is most strictly construed, it will utilize studies comparing students in segregated and racially balanced environments when those studies seem pertinent.

### Recognizing the Implications of Diversity

Desegregation is a political and legal concept. But situations which may be identical in the sense that they are all legally desegregated may vary tremendously in what they are actually like. To illustrate, they may differ dramatically in the relative proportions of white and black students, the social class of the students, the extent to which there are initial social class and academic differences between blacks and whites, etc. There is reason to believe that differences such as those just mentioned will have an impact on student outcomes. For example, research suggests that the ratio of black to white in a desegregated situation is related to intergroup attitudes (Dentler & Elkins, 1967; McPartland, 1968; St. John & Lewis, 1975; U.S. Commission on Civil Right, 1967). Specifically, St. John and Lewis (1975) found that being part of the majority group in their classroom increased interracial popularity for both black and white children. So, blacks were most popular with whites in majority-black classrooms, whereas whites were most popular with blacks in majority-white classrooms. There is also some evidence that interracial friendship patterns are influenced by whether black students attend a desegregated neighborhood school or a more distant desegregated school (St. John & Lewis, 1975; Willie, 1973). Hence, it seems likely that the wide variation in the racial mix of the schools studied and in the schools' community settings contributes substantially to making it difficult to draw any overall conclusions about the impact of desegregation.

Work in the field of evaluation research suggests that even desegregated situations which may appear similar in terms of criteria such as those mentioned above may vary tremendously in the degree to which and in the way in which they are implemented (Cook & Campbell, 1976; Guttentag & Struening, 1975). Thus, even if one program looks superficially like another, one cannot safely assume that they actually take similar

shape. For example, even if the instances of desegregation were similar in the ratios of blacks to whites in the schools and the surrounding communities, there would probably still be such substantial differences between the situations that they might be expected to produce widely varying results. Some of these schools might distribute black and white students throughout their classes in proportions roughly similar to their proportion in the school. Others might resegregate black and white students within the school building. It is reasonable to speculate that two such schools could have entirely different effects on students, with the resegregated school, for example, reinforcing prejudiced attitudes and tendencies toward in-group choice. Indeed, a study by Koslin, Amarel, and Ames (1969) found less racial polarization in classrooms that closely reflected the racial balance of the school they were in than in classrooms in which the racial composition differed from that of the school.

The fact that instances of desegregation that appear similar on the surface may differ markedly in critical aspects of implementation has important implications for the interpretation of large-scale studies that analyze outcome variables in a number of segregated and desegregated schools and conclude that desegregation has no impact. Indeed, it could be that desegregation has an impact that is masked because of the tremendous variance caused by other uncontrolled variables. Alternatively, the positive impact of desegregation in some schools' classrooms might be counterbalanced by the negative impact in others. Sometimes investigators recognize these kinds of problems. For example, in a chapter titled "Effects of Desegregation on Achievement-Relevant Motivation," Blener and Gerard (1975) write:

Our statistical design allowed us to examine differences between samples of minority children at different points... zero years in the receiving schools, versus one year, versus three years controlling for variations in response due to age and sex within each group. Considering the large amount of uncontrolled variability in the children's actual school experience, it is surprising that we found any differences at all (p. 146).

More often, however, the problem is completely ignored.

The preceding comments about the diversity of desegregation programs and even

of the ways in which apparently similar programs can be implemented give rise to a very important characteristic of this review. When it is possible, I will attempt to differentiate between different kinds of desegregated situations and their effects. Thus, in addition to exploring the question of what, if any, conclusions can be drawn overall about the impact of desegregation, I will also deal to some extent with the issue of what is known about effective desegregation strategies and techniques.

### Facing the Reality of Methodological Problems in Desegregation Research

Yet another issue which impedes assessing the impact of desegregation is the myriad of design and measurement problems which researchers face.<sup>1</sup> As Crain (1976) has pointed out, there are strong pressures on researchers involved with studies on desegregation to complete their work rapidly. Often school boards give permission for studies in their districts in the hope that the study will supply useful information for decision making. Similarly, funding agencies or the governing bodies of which the funding agencies are a part often sponsor desegregation research in order to generate data to guide policy decisions. These decisions are frequently pressing, so the idea of waiting for research results for any large number of years is highly unattractive (cf. Weiss, 1977). These pressures for rapid results are of course compounded by the academic reward structure, which also strongly encourages rapid publication. Hence, for a variety of reasons, including the fact that cross-sectional studies are generally less expensive than longitudinal studies, the large majority of the research dealing with desegregation and intergroup relations is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. Rather ironically, cross-sectional data, which is attractive to policy makers because of its relatively low cost and quick payoff, does not allow one to make the causal inferences with which policy makers are frequently concerned. For example, it seems about as reasonable to interpret the positive relation McPartland (1968) found in survey data between intergroup contact and racial attitudes as suggesting that positive attitudes lead to contact as it does to interpret it as suggesting that contact leads to positive attitudes. Unfortunately because the data are cross-sectional, they give little indication of the relative importance of these two causal sequences in accounting for the relationship found between contact and positive attitudes.

Although longitudinal studies have a distinct advantage over cross-sectional studies, they too frequently have serious problems. First, one must have the financial resources and long-term cooperation from a school that longitudinal studies require. The pressures and difficulties of doing long-term work are so great that very few desegregation studies span more than 1 year. Although occasional studies do span 2-5 or more years (e.g., Bowman, 1973; Gerard & Miller, 1975; Laird & Weeks, 1966; Savage, 1971; Schofield, 1982; Smith, 1971) they almost inevitably tend to encounter potentially serious problems. For example, in the 3 years between 1966 and 1969 Gerard and Miller (1975) lost approximately one-third of their original sample. The tendency of longitudinal studies to cover short periods at the beginning of students' desegregated schooling severely limits the extent to which it is appropriate to generalize from their findings.

In addition to covering short periods of time, many longitudinal studies of desegregation employ no control group. Rather, they simply measure a group of students before and after desegregation. Writing about this kind of design, Campbell and Stanley (1963) say: "While this design...is judged as...worth doing where nothing better can be done...it is introduced...as a 'bad example' (p. 7) of a research strategy." Campbell and Stanley go on to point out the serious threats to internal validity in designs such as this. Because there is no control group, the researcher has little idea of whether the effect found, if any, stems from factors like historical change or maturation of the subjects rather than from the treatment being investigated.

The importance of having control groups in longitudinal studies of school desegregation is heightened by the fact that there are indeed both age trends and clear historical trends in many of the variables most frequently studied as outcomes of desegregation. For example, Criswell's (1939) early work on age trends suggests that black and white children interact less with those of the race as they grow older. Other research supports Criswell's early finding of increasing hostility and racial cleavage with age (Aronson & Nobel, 1966; Deutschberger, 1946; Dwyer, 1958; Trager and Yarrow, 1952). Hence, changes in interracial attitudes owing to age may confound changes resulting from desegregation unless a control group is available to which the



desegregated group can be compared. Similarly, survey research suggests that there have been definite shifts in the racial attitudes of both whites and blacks since the Brown decision (Campbell, 1971; Schuman & Hatchett, 1974). Thus, there is a very real possibility that, in research without a control group, changes resulting from desegregation will be confounded with changes owing to larger societal trends. The desirability of having control groups in longitudinal studies of desegregation is illustrated by a study performed by Williams and Venditti (1969). These researchers found that, over the course of a year, black students in both segregated and desegregated schools became more negative in their attitudes toward certain aspects of their schools and the students in these schools. If measures had been taken only in the desegregated schools, the changes in attitudes might well have been incorrectly attributed to the desegregation experience.

Desegregation researchers recognize the importance of control groups but often are unable to locate or gain access to such groups in spite of serious thought and effort. Finding appropriate control groups is much more difficult than it might appear, as many of the desegregation programs that are most easily accessible to researchers are voluntary programs. Inasmuch as volunteers in these programs are self-selected for their interest in attending a desegregated school, a control group of students who have not volunteered for such a program is clearly of questionable value. Students interested in the desegregation program who were not admitted would make a good control group only if a random selection process were used in deciding which of the applicants would be admitted to the program. Often this is not the case (Pettigrew, 1977).

Finally, there are problems even with a design that has longitudinal data on reasonably well-matched students at one desegregated and one segregated school. The principal problem is that the impact of the schools as institutions may be confounded with the impact of desegregated classrooms, which is only one aspect of those schools. Obviously schools that are similar in most objective respects on which "experimental" and "control" schools are usually matched can differ significantly in other respects that may have implications for the students' development. For example, a number of studies have suggested that the principal of a desegregated school has a very major impact on



how intergroup relations develop in the school (St. John, 1975). Hence, the conclusions drawn from research comparing racial attitudes in one desegregated and segregated school might be affected greatly by the principal who happened to be at the desegregated school. To avoid such problems, one could study a whole array of segregated and desegregated schools, but this strategy requires vast amounts of time, money, and effort. In addition, the "error variance" due to differences between the various desegregated schools might well mask whatever effect or effects desegregation might have.

Desegregation studies are also often plagued by self-selection problems at the institutional and the individual level that limit their external validity. As Pettigrew (1969a) points out, schools that agree to make themselves available to researchers interested in desegregation are clearly not a random sample of all desegregated schools. For example, such well-regarded school systems as those in New Haven, White Plains, and Berkeley have allowed significant studies of desegregation, whereas many less well-regarded systems, including Cleveland, Chicago, and Los Angeles, refused to permit their students to participate in a major federal survey of desegregated schools even though participation by school districts in this study was ordered by Congress in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pettigrew, 1969a). Similarly, it is reasonable to hypothesize that children whose parents refuse to let them participate in research on desegregation may well not be a random sample of the children in such schools.

In sum, any review of the literature on the effect of desegregation on outcomes such as academic achievement or intergroup attitudes must face the reality that much of the research is flawed in one way or another. However, it does appear possible nonetheless to draw some conclusions from it and that is the task to which the paper will turn shortly. Because the amount, quality, and typical problems of research on different outcomes of desegregation differ markedly, I have not adopted one set of standards which will be applied across the board to determine whether a study is sound enough to be utilized in this review. Rather, in each section I will provide the reader with information on data base on which the conclusions in that section rest.

## The Effect of School Desegregation on Academic Achievement

### Achievement in Math and Reading

There has been a great deal of research on the academic impact of school desegregation. An obvious reason for this was the expectation on the part of many whites and blacks alike that school desegregation would enhance the achievement of black pupils which has clearly lagged behind that of whites (Howard & Hammond, 1985). The reasons given for this expectation have been many and varied. Some are relatively straightforward, like the theory that the relatively superior facilities and better educated staffs available in many previously all white schools should enhance achievement. Others are more complex and psychologically oriented. For example, a number of social scientists have put forward variations on a theory that Miller (1980) has called the lateral transmission of values hypothesis -- the idea that black students comingled with whites, who are often from more middle class backgrounds, would be influenced by their middle class peers' stronger orientation toward achievement (Coleman et al. 1966; Crain & Weissman, 1972; Pettigrew, 1969b). Recent research has not lent credence to this notion (McGarvey, 1977; Miller, 1980; Patchen, 1982). However, there are enough remaining plausible ideas about why and how desegregation might influence black achievement to make the issue worthy of investigation.

The past decade has seen a large number of reviews of the literature on desegregation and black achievement, many of them quite recent (Armor, 1984; Bradley & Bradley, 1977; Cook, 1984; Crain, 1984; Mahard & Crain, 1983; Kroi 1978, Miller & Carlson, 1984; Stephan, 1984; St. John, 1975; Walberg, 1984; Weinberg, 1977; Wortman, 1984). The 1984 reviews just cited emerged out of an unusual endeavor on the part of the National Institute of Education. NIE commissioned papers from seven scholars specializing in the area to examine the impact of school desegregation on black academic achievement. These individuals were not only sophisticated with regard to research methodology but also represented very different political stances. They agreed on a set of criteria to be utilized in selecting studies for inclusion in their analyses. Then each proceeded to conduct a meta-analysis and write up a paper. The reviews cited above will constitute the basis for the discussion of desegregation and black achievement

presented here.

The earliest of the reviews just cited was conducted by St. John (1975) who examined over sixty studies of desegregation and black achievement. She included at least four different kinds of desegregation in her review-- desegregation occurring through demographic changes in neighborhoods, through school board rezoning of districts or school closings, through voluntary transfer of pupils through open enrollment or busing, and through total district desegregation. Although she classified studies by their design features she did little or no selection of studies on methodological criteria. St. John (1975, p. 36) concluded that "adequate data has not yet been gathered to determine a causal relation between school racial composition and academic achievement." The data did make it clear, however, that neither black nor white children suffer academically due to desegregation. Finally St. John found some indication that younger children, especially those of kindergarten age, tend to benefit more academically than older ones.

Weinberg (1977) reviewed 23 studies of black achievement in interracial schools and another 48 studies of desegregated school -- i.e. those in which the interracial nature of the student body was a consequence of a conscious policy designed to end segregation. Like St. John, his review did not select studies on strict methodological criteria. Weinberg concluded that the majority of studies of both kinds indicated improved minority achievement, although a substantial proportion reported no effect. Again there was no evidence at all of academic harm.

Bradley and Bradley (1977) noted the inconsistency of the St. John and Weinberg conclusions and used it as an important part of their rationale for yet a third review. Yet, rather ironically, their paper can be understood as agreeing with both positions. Specifically, they agree with Weinberg that a majority of the studies they reviewed concluded that desegregation has positive effects on black achievement. However, unlike Weinberg, they perform a close methodological analysis of the studies they review. This analysis leads them to conclude that each of the studies showing positive effects suffers from methodological problems. Similarly, though, they criticize most of the studies

showing no effect. Thus they end up agreeing with St. John that the evidence is inconclusive, but that it suggests no effect or a positive one rather than a negative one. One other feature of this review should be noted. Unlike Weinberg's, it divides the studies by type of desegregation. Interestingly, all of the studies of open enrollment plans and "central schools," defined as desegregated schools in small cities which house all of a school system's students in given grades, show positive effects. In contrast, relatively few of those in which desegregation was achieved by school closing or busing show gains. However Bradley and Bradley do not interpret these patterns as having any real significance because the number and quality of studies varies so much from one type of desegregation to another.

Krol's (1978) review was the first to apply formal meta-analytic techniques to the literature in this area. Meta-analysis provides a formal statistical method for combining results from different studies, as long as those studies provide appropriate statistical information (Glass, McGaw & Smith, 1981; Rosenthal, 1978). Thus, it differs from the sort of reviews conducted by St. John, Weinberg, and Bradley and Bradley in that it can yield specific statistical estimates of the impact of a particular practice. Krol first eliminated studies with certain glaring design flaws from further consideration. Then he coded a variety of attributes like design-type, for the remaining 55 studies. Finally, he converted the reported achievement test results to a standardized estimate that could be summed or compared from study to study. Krol concluded overall that the average effect of desegregation on achievement is .16 standard deviations, which can be understood more meaningfully as from 1 1/2 to 3 months gain per academic year. (The amount of gain depends on the kind of test). The subset of studies with good control groups yielded a more modest estimate of .10 of a standard deviation in gain. However, it must be noted that although these estimates are both positive they are not statistically significant -- that is, typical canons of quantitative analysis would not allow one to conclude that there is a clear positive effect of desegregation on achievement from these data.

The last of the pre-1984 reviews was authored by Mahard & Crain (1983). This study, like Krol, involved a formal meta-analysis. However, Mahard and Crain utilized a

larger group of 93 studies. The greater recency of their review allowed them to use studies uncompleted when Krol did his work. Also, Mahard and Crain included studies in which ability measures, such as IQ, were utilized as the dependent variable whereas Krol included only studies using achievement measures. The Mahard and Crain results are surprisingly consistent with Krol's. Specifically, the mean effect size in Mahard and Crain's (1983) review was .08, very similar to that produced by Krol for the "better studies." However, Mahard and Crain argue that this effect size underestimates desegregation's real potential since it is computed based on studies which included those of students transferred from segregated to desegregated systems as well as those of students who have experienced only desegregated education. Examining 23 studies which compared the achievement of desegregated black students in kindergarten and first grade with that of their segregated peers, Mahard and Crain found a much larger effect, .25 of a standard deviation which roughly translates into one-third of a grade level. Also of note was the finding that studies using measures of ability, like IQ, found improvement similar to those which utilized achievement measures (Mahard & Crain, 1983).

The 1984 NIE sponsored reviews will be discussed as a group, because many of their procedures and their conclusions were similar. As previously indicated, seven scholars were commissioned to perform meta-analytic reviews working with a set of 19 relatively well-executed studies which meet a large number of design and analysis standards. Three of the reviews are what one would expect from the foregoing description, although individual authors tended to add or delete a few studies from the core group of 19 (Armstrong, 1984; Miller & Carlson, 1984; Stephan, 1984). Walberg's (1984) paper also presents the results of a meta-analysis of the core studies. However, its emphasis is on comparing the impact of desegregation with that of other educational policies or practices. Wortman (1984) reports a meta-analysis on a group of 31 studies which he felt were worthy of inclusion as well as one performed on the basic 19. Crain's (1984) review challenges the wisdom of selecting only 19 studies for review on a number of cogent grounds. Cook's (1984) paper examines the six others and asks what overall conclusions flow from the project as a whole. Thus we will focus on Cook's paper, referring to the others where necessary. However, before turning to that I will discuss an

important issue raised by Crain's paper.

Crain's major point is that the panel's procedures for selecting the core studies led them inadvertently but systematically to underestimate desegregation's effect. Specifically, the panel chose to select primarily longitudinal studies, rejecting cross-sectional survey studies as methodologically inferior. They also decided to reject those studies which used different pre- and post-tests. However, utilization of these inclusion criteria almost automatically results in exclusion of virtually all of the studies of desegregation conducted with kindergarteners and first graders. Since very young children enter school without much in the way of formal math or reading skills, pretests for these age groups measure "readiness" as opposed to achievement which is measured by the posttests. Thus, longitudinal studies of these age groups are almost of necessity characterized by measurement practices which disqualified them from inclusion in the core set of studies. Crain demonstrates that studies of children of these grade levels, be they longitudinal, experimental, or "cohort" in design, yield both larger estimates of desegregation's impact and more consistently positive results than studies with other age groups. Furthermore, he argues that these studies are representative of the kind of desegregation most children experience, pointing out that most desegregation plans desegregate children from kindergarten or grade 1 on up. This means that in the early years of a desegregation program when research is most likely to be carried out, older children enter desegregated schools having prior experience with segregated education. Their experience is thus quite different from that of the children who follow them, who will start in desegregated rather than in segregated schools just as the kindergarten and first grade students in the rejected studies did.

Cook (1984) concedes that Crain has raised an important issue, but fails to concur that the panel has made a fundamental error. He points out that a number of the studies Crain discusses stem from one voluntary desegregation program, Project Concern, and thus questions the generality of Crain's conclusions. In addition, he notes that if the students who volunteered to attend desegregated schools were more motivated than those in their control groups, the conclusion that desegregation accounts for their increased achievement is spurious. I am inclined to give more credence to Crain's



concerns than Cook does for two reasons. First, it seems to me eminently plausible that transferring from a segregated to a desegregated school might cause some adjustment problems which would not occur if one started school in a desegregated environment. If one wants to know the effect of desegregated schooling in general, it seems unwise to focus on students who have had to make a transition, especially if the study measuring desegregation's impact is carried out close to the time of transition. Secondly, the technical criticisms which Cook raises with regard to Crain's work do not seem to me to challenge Crain's basic conclusion. For example, while Cook's point about the achievement of volunteers mentioned above is valid when it applies, a number of the studies Crain cites used random assignment to the desegregated and control samples, thus avoiding this pitfall. Their results appear no less positive than those of other studies Crain cites. In sum, Crain's paper raises the very real possibility that the panel has somewhat underestimated the academic impact of desegregation. This caveat should be kept in mind as I proceed next to summarize the results of the panel's work.

Cook (1984) ends his paper with several conclusions based on his own analyses and his examination of the other commissioned papers. Since these conclusions seem to be a generally fair summary of the project's overall outcome I will structure the following discussion around them. First, consistent with every other review of which I am aware, Cook concludes that desegregation does not undermine black achievement. (Although the review did not address this issue it should be noted that a large number of studies have come to a similar conclusion about white achievement). None of the individual 1984 papers even suggested a negative impact of desegregation on achievement, although Walberg (1984) concludes that desegregation is not as likely to improve achievement as a number of other educational reforms.

Secondly, Cook concludes that on the average desegregation did not lead to an increase in the mathematics achievement of black students, a conclusion consistent with that of Armor (1984), Miller & Carlson (1984) and Stephan (1984). Wortman reported a small positive effect on math in the core studies and larger one on his set of 31 studies. Crain (1984) and Walberg (1984) do not deal with the distinction between reading and mathematics gains in any detailed way.



In contrast to the situation with mathematics, Cook concludes that desegregation does increase the mean reading level of black students. All of the panelists who dealt with the issue agreed that reading gains occurred. Their estimates ranged from .06 to .26 of a standard deviation which translates into roughly a two to six weeks gain. These gains were generally computed per study rather than per year. Interpreting this gain is complex. First, one can think of it as a rough estimate of what is gained in a year of desegregation, since most of the studies included in the core group of 19 spanned just one year. On the other hand, there is no evidence to justify multiplying this effect by twelve to estimate gain over a student's entire elementary and secondary career. In fact, there is some counter evidence (Mahard & Crain, 1983). While the small number of studies spanning two years tended to find larger effects than those covering just one, the reverse was the case for the three studies which lasted three years. Further, the majority of the studies in the core covered the first year of desegregation which may differ from later years in important ways, including its impact on achievement.

Cook also urges some caution in interpreting these results for the following reason. Although some mean or average gain seems clearly present, other methods of looking at the data do not lead to such an optimistic conclusion. Specifically, the median scores found in these reviews, the scores which have an equal number of scores above and below them, were almost always greater than zero but lower than the means. Also, the modal gain scores, the most frequently found scores, were near zero. The explanation for these apparently somewhat contradictory findings is that all of the analyses included some studies with unusually large gains. Such gains contributed substantially to raising the overall means. However, they had a much less potent effect on the medians and modes.

These somewhat technical distinctions are worth making because of their implications for the interpretation of the data. Specifically, the gain in mean reading scores suggests that desegregation, on the average, will bring academic benefits. However, the less impressive results for the medians and modes suggest that not all instances of desegregation will lead to academic gains. In fact, since the mode was not significantly above zero, one might conclude a "typical" desegregated school, if such an entity exists, is not likely to produce reading gains.

The fact that some schools show atypically large gains supports the point made earlier that desegregation is a very varied process and that different instances of this process can be expected to have very different outcomes. It also suggests the potential utility of systematically exploring the achievement research to see if certain types of desegregation experiences tend to be associated with particularly large or small achievement gains. This task is difficult to achieve with the NIE sponsored reviews for several reasons. First, the core group included only 19 studies, and these studies were of quite similar situations. Specifically almost all of them involved just one or two years of desegregation, making comparison between initial and later gains difficult. Similarly, fifteen of the nineteen core studies were of voluntary desegregation, making comparison between voluntary and mandatory programs problematic. Nonetheless, these reviews and others, especially Mahard and Crain (1983), do give some tentative indications about the characteristics of desegregation programs which may have a more positive impact on academic achievement than others.

One suggestion which emerges repeatedly in the reviews is the idea that desegregation may be most effective when carried out in elementary school, perhaps even early elementary school. (St. John, 1975; Cook, 1984; Crain, 1984; Stephan, 1984). Crain (1984) and Mahard and Crain (1983) present the most detailed discussion of this issue and make the strongest case for the benefits of desegregation during the very early elementary school years. First, Mahard and Crain (1983) point out that all 11 samples of students they examined which began desegregation in kindergarten and over 3/4's of the 44 groups of students they examined who were desegregated as first graders showed achievement gains. In sharp contrast, roughly 50% of the samples of students in the more advanced grades did so. In addition, the estimated effect size of the changes for the kindergartners and first graders is greater than those previously discussed, being .25 of a standard deviation or roughly equivalent to .3 of a year in school. Thus Mahard and Crain (1983, p. 125) conclude that the academic "effects of desegregation are almost completely restricted to the early primary grades." As discussed previously, Cook (1984) raises several technical issues which somewhat weaken the apparent strength of Mahard and Crain's data. Yet Cook's own analysis of the NIE core studies supports the idea that early desegregation is the most beneficial by demonstrating gains which are largest

in the second grade and which tend to decrease markedly thereafter. Contrasting somewhat with this majority view is Wortman's conclusion that whereas elementary school desegregation has more positive effects than high school desegregation, the gains for desegregation in the later elementary years are greater than those in the early elementary years. Finally Armor, the lone dissenter of those who tackled this issue in the reviews discussed, sees no suggestion of a grade-linked pattern.

There is also some indication that the type of desegregation program may make a difference in achievement effects. Mahard and Crain (1983) present data suggesting that metropolitan desegregation plans may have stronger achievement effects than others. This finding is consistent with the suggestion made by Cook (1984) and Stephan (1984) that voluntary plans may have a greater impact than mandatory ones, since virtually all of the metropolitan plans in Mahard and Crain's sample involved the voluntary transfer of black students from inner city to suburban schools. Their findings are also consistent with Bradley and Bradley's (1977) finding that all the studies of open enrollment programs, another kind of voluntary program, reported positive effects.

The search for other variables which influence the impact desegregation has on academic achievement is greatly impeded by the paucity of studies of this issue and methodological problems with these studies. Thus rather than speculate on the basis of single studies or inadequate groups of studies I will now turn to another aspect of the impact of desegregation on black students' academic careers.

#### Drop-Outs, Push-Outs and Suspensions

It is clear that black children are suspended from school much more frequently than whites. In fact, black children are from two to five times more likely to be suspended than whites (Children's Defense Fund, 1974; Arnez, 1978, Kaeser, 1979). Similarly, black students are more likely to drop out of school than whites. National statistics indicate a dropout rate during the high school years of 10% for whites and 15% for blacks (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1981). Both suspensions and drop-outs seem bound to influence the academic achievement of students since a student

not in school for either reason misses the opportunity to learn material presented to those in school.

Although the disparity in white and black rates of suspension and dropping out is a serious issue in and of itself, the real issue for the purposes of this paper is whether desegregation influences either of these phenomena. There is not nearly as much material available on this question as on the question of how desegregation influences academic achievement. However, the studies that exist suggest, perhaps surprisingly, that desegregation has somewhat opposite effects on these two phenomena.

Frequently desegregation is accompanied by a marked increase in the student suspension rate (Eyler, Cook & Ward, 1983). In extreme cases suspensions may double (Project Student Concerns, 1977; Foster, 1977). There is reason to believe that such increases may be limited to the first year when concern about desegregation is apt to be very high (Trent, 1981). However, it is not clear whether the decline in suspensions frequently averred to occur after the first year of desegregation returns the situation to the pre-desegregation status quo or not. To my knowledge there is very little evidence about whether desegregation increases the disparity between suspension rates for blacks and whites, but there are some indications that this may be the case. For example, Larkin (1979) reports that schools in Milwaukee which were desegregated after a court-order and went from being virtually all white to being 15-34% black showed both a marked increase in overall suspensions and an unusually high disparity in black/white suspension rates compared to previously integrated schools in the same city. Kaeser (1979) shows that, in spite of similar suspension rates for black and white students in highly segregated schools in Cleveland, blacks are disproportionately suspended in virtually all the racially mixed schools.

There appear to be even fewer studies of desegregation and dropping out than of desegregation and suspension, but a few are available. Bachman (1971) found that Northern black students attending desegregated schools were less likely to drop out of high school than those in segregated schools. However, the meaning of this finding is clouded by the fact that they also came from homes of higher socio-economic status.

Eyler, Cook and Ward (1983) report data from two studies on desegregation and dropping out. One was a nationwide study of large schools with Hispanic enrollments of 5% or more. (Aspira of America, 1979). Both blacks and Hispanics generally showed the highest drop out rates in moderately or heavily segregated schools. However, one exception occurred with blacks in the South who were more likely to graduate in highly segregated districts than elsewhere. A rather different study explored the relative dropout rate of minority students in different kinds of desegregated schools. (Felice & Richardson, 1977). It concluded that minority students were less likely to drop out of school where their peers were of relatively high socioeconomic status and where teachers had relatively positive attitudes about the minority students' capabilities than in other kinds of schools.

In summary, although these data are quite sparse, there is reason for concern about the possible increase in the suspension of black students, especially in the first year or so of desegregation. On the other hand, desegregation, especially to schools of higher socioeconomic status, may curb the disproportionately high drop out rate of black students, perhaps an ultimately more important issue.

### **The Effect of Elementary and Secondary School Desegregation on Adult Outcomes Such as Educational Attainment**

#### **The Importance of the Issue**

As indicated earlier, there has been a relatively large amount of research on the impact of desegregation on achievement test scores. However, it is important not to overemphasize achievement scores as an end in and of themselves. One might assume such scores are worthy of study because as measures of knowledge they predict success in college or, even more importantly, occupational attainment in later life. Yet there is clear evidence that achievement scores are, at best, fairly weak indicators of college grades or occupational success (Jencks, et al., 1972; Marston, 1971; McClelland, 1973). It is reasonable to argue that the reason such scores have received such disproportionate attention from researchers is that they are widely administered and hence convenient rather than that they are an outcome of premier importance.

In the past decade the work of a small group of researchers, most notably Braddock, McPartland and Crain, has opened up a new and potentially very important line of inquiry-- the impact on desegregation on outcomes such as college choice, occupational attainment, income, and political involvement. Braddock & Dawkins (1984 p. 367) make the case for this line of inquiry by pointing out that desegregation may have long-term social and economic consequences for minorities by providing "(1) access to useful social networks of job information, contacts and sponsorship; (2) socialization for aspirations and entrance into 'nontraditional' career lines with higher income returns; (3) development of interpersonal skills that are useful in interracial contexts; (4) reduced social inertia -- increased tolerance of and willingness to participate in desegregated environments; and (5) avoidance of negative attributions which are often associated with 'black' institutions (Crain, 1970; Crain & Weisman, 1972; McPartland & Crain, 1980; Braddock, 1980; Braddock & McPartland, 1982; Coleman et al. 1966)."

The evidence concerning desegregation's impact on such outcomes is quite sparse. Furthermore, almost all of these studies explicitly or tacitly use the word desegregated as a synonym for racially mixed. Thus they are generally not studies of the outcomes of specific court-ordered desegregation programs. Yet I believe these studies are well worth discussing because of the fundamental importance of such outcomes -- to black Americans in particular and to American society in general.

#### Post-Secondary Educational Outcomes of School Desegregation

Braddock and Dawkins (1984) point out that school desegregation can influence the amount and the type of post-secondary education blacks receive as well as their academic success in the post-secondary years. For none of these outcomes is the evidence so clear cut that the issue of desegregation's impact can be definitively settled. Yet, some suggestive data are available.

The data on the impact of desegregation on the amount of post-secondary education blacks complete is somewhat mixed and seems to depend on the part of the country under consideration. Crain (1970) utilized retrospective data gathered by the



U.S. Civil Rights Commission to explore college attendance and completion patterns in a small sample of Northern black adults. He found that roughly one-third of the males from desegregated schools went to college compared to 24 percent from segregated schools. Segregated and desegregated black females evidenced much smaller differences in the same direction. Crain and Mahard (1978) utilized survey data from the National Longitudinal Survey of the High School Graduating Class of 1972 (NLS) to explore this question with a data base more adequate to the job. Using data on 3,000 black high school graduates, they replicated the earlier suggestion of benefits of desegregation to Northern blacks finding that desegregation was associated with college enrollment and persistence for these individuals. However, results for Southern blacks were generally negative rather than positive.

Braddock and McPartland (1982) also utilized the original NLS data base, which they merged with later NLS follow up surveys, to explore the same issue. Not surprisingly their results are moderately consistent with Crain's. They found a weak trend suggesting a positive impact of desegregation on years of college completed for Northern males. Less consistently the impact for Southerners was positive, but so near zero as to best be interpreted as signifying no impact in either direction. Since the studies just mentioned constitute, to my knowledge, most of those which deal with the impact of desegregation on the amount of post-secondary education blacks complete, it seems best to conclude that the impact of desegregation on college attainment is weakly positive for Northern blacks. Its effect on Southern blacks is quite unclear but most likely weak in any case.

Another issue which these researchers have explored is whether desegregation leads blacks to be somewhat more likely to attend predominately white colleges rather than predominately black colleges. Although the data may be somewhat clearer in this point than in years of college completed, just how one should evaluate the outcome in question is more controversial. Presumably, educational attainment is a valued and valuable commodity in our society. Thus, social policies encouraging greater educational attainment for minorities will facilitate desired social ends. In contrast, there is clear room for debate over one's evaluation of a social policy which encourages black students



to enroll in heavily white rather than heavily black institutions of higher education.

The researchers working in this area tend to argue that such an outcome is valuable. They base their argument on several considerations. The primary one is that attendance at predominately white institutions of higher education tends to have positive job market consequences for several reasons. Specifically they contend that such attendance helps to reduce the structural barriers which inhibit the social mobility of blacks. For example, as previously mentioned, they emphasize the importance of social networks in job attainment and argue that attendance at predominately white institutions may provide contacts which will help blacks become aware of and to be considered for a wider range of jobs than might otherwise be the case. In addition they point to research suggesting that some employers tend to derogate degrees received from black institutions and to prefer black graduates from white institutions (Crain, 1984; Braddock & McPartland, 1983; McPartland & Crain, 1980). This situation may be at least partly responsible for indications that black graduates of white institutions, especially black male graduates, earn more than roughly equivalent individual graduates from black institutions, (Braddock, 1985). Most generally, they argue that attendance at a predominately white college helps break a cycle of racial isolation in which both blacks and whites, unused to contact with each other, avoid each other in spite of the ways in which this may limit their occupational, social, and residential choices or their civic involvement. As evidence for this general line of reasoning Braddock (1985) cites Green's (1981, 1982) research on school desegregation and employment desegregation. Green collected follow-up data in 1980 on a national sample of black college freshmen in 1971. Individuals who had gone to a desegregated high school or college were more likely to have both white work associates and white friends as adults. Finally, it is worth pointing out that black student's enrollment in predominately white institutions does not seriously threaten the enrollments of predominately black institutions which have served and continue to serve an important role in our society. Willie and Cunnigen (1981) have pointed out that the number of black students enrolled in college more than doubled in the decade between 1968 and 1978. Such dramatic growth in black college enrollment means that a great many black students can choose to enroll in predominately white institutions before black colleges have their applicant pools shrink.

The other side of the coin, of course, is that black students often find white college environments unsupportive and even alienating (Davis & Borders-Palinson, 1973; Willie & McCord, 1972). There are also some data which suggest that black students enrolled in white institutions are less likely to stay in college and to graduate than those enrolled in black institutions (Braddock, 1981; Gurin & Epps, 1975; Thomas, 1981). However, the situation is somewhat more complex than the preceding might suggest. A recent study utilizing the NLS data concurred that blacks in white institutions are less likely to complete their degrees in four years than are their counterparts of equivalent background and academic skill level in black institutions. Nonetheless, by seven years after entry into college this difference comes close to disappearing (Braddock & Dawkins, 1984).

Having briefly discussed a few of the pros and cons of this outcome, I will now turn to a discussion of the data which suggest that desegregation at the pre-college level encourages black students to enroll in predominately white colleges. There are two recent studies which support this conclusion (Braddock, 1980; Braddock & McPartland, 1982). The first study showed a fairly strong positive relation between attending a desegregated high school and enrolling in a predominately white college. However, the number of students and colleges involved in this study, which was carried out in one southern state, was relatively small. More convincing evidence comes from a second study based on the NLS data on 3,000 black high school graduates which was previously mentioned. Separate analyses were conducted for the North and the South for good reason. Geographic proximity is a very major factor in college choice, and the vast majority of four year traditionally black colleges are located in the South. Thus, one can reasonably ask whether desegregated high schools influence the kind of college Southern black students enrolling in both two and four year institutions of higher education choose. This is not really a reasonable research question with Northern blacks, since so few predominately black 4 year colleges are available within a reasonable distance of their homes. However, many Northern blacks do enroll in 2 year community colleges, which can have very varied racial compositions. Analysis of the Southern data set, utilizing controls for variables such as the student's social class background, high school grades, and the like, found that attendance at predominately white institutions was more

likely for students who had had prior experience with desegregation than for others. This pattern was especially marked for those enrolling in four-year colleges. The Northern sample showed a parallel pattern for enrollment in two year colleges. Previously desegregated blacks in this sample were also more likely to enroll in four year colleges. Braddock & McPartland (1982) interpret this as evidence that prior desegregation experience frees these students to risk attendance at a predominately white institution, the only readily available kind of four year college for most Northern blacks.

### **The Effect of School Desegregation on Self-Concept**

A considerable body of research has explored the impact of school desegregation on black children's self-esteem. Before discussing the conclusions flowing from this research, I will briefly discuss the situation which led to such interest in this issue. Social scientists participated in the Brown decision in two main ways. First, a number of distinguished individuals offered testimony in the cases which were consolidated into the Brown case. Second, a large group of social scientists signed an amicus curiae brief arguing that segregation had a number of pernicious effects.

One argument against segregation which was presented in both these contexts was that segregation had a negative effect on the self-concept of black children. The most well-known studies of this contention were based on the work of Clark and Clark, (1947). The Supreme Court decision in Brown included a statement to the effect that separating black children from their white peers "generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone" (Brown v Board of Education, 1954). This statement created a heady sense of excitement in the social science community which was not used to having its findings utilized in major court cases. Thus it was natural that the study of black self-esteem should be a topic which garnered considerable interest and that numerous investigators would explore whether desegregation enhanced blacks' self-concepts.

However, recent work has suggested that the belief that black children in segregated environments have low self-esteem or experience even self-hatred may well not be accurate. Although this belief was widespread for a substantial period of time

(Cross, 1980), the evidence supporting it appears flawed. First, there were some important methodological problems which characterized many of the studies upon which this conclusion was based (Banks, 1976; Spencer, 1976). Second, Cross (1980) and others have pointed out that the interpretation of the findings from these studies has not been entirely consistent with the data. Specifically, Cross argues that there is a difference between one's personal sense of self and one's feeling about the racial or ethnic group to which one belongs. He sees the former construct, which he calls personal identity, as conceptually and empirically distinct from the latter, which he calls reference group orientation. In an extensive review of the literature, Cross (1980) points out that virtually all of the studies of black children's self-esteem performed from the late 1930's until 1960 were studies of reference group orientation and not personal identity which is conceptually closer to self-esteem. Many of these studies utilized the well-known "doll study" paradigm which Clark and Clark (1947) employed extensively. In such studies children are presented with black and white dolls or pictures of black and white individuals. They are then asked a) to indicate which doll they are most like and/or b) to choose the doll to be assigned a positively or negatively toned evaluation (the "good" doll, the "dirty" doll etc.). Studies of this sort showed two consistent trends. First, white children tended to identify themselves as white and to show in-group preference (e.g. to assign positive traits to whites and negative ones to blacks) quite consistently. In contrast, black children generally showed no consistent preference (Banks, 1976). These findings were interpreted as showing self-hatred or rejection on the part of black children because in comparison to the white children's strong tendency to identify with and favor their own group the black children's choices showed a lack of consistent attachment to and positive evaluation of their own group. As Banks (1976) points out, a very different way of interpreting these data is that blacks show less ethnocentrism than whites. Even if one believes these data are better interpreted as indicating a lack of positive feelings toward the group to which these children belong this does not necessarily imply rejection of themselves. (Lack of positive regard for one's racial or ethnic group may well be something to be concerned about, but is it not the same as rejection of self.) Rather surprisingly, Cross' (1980) review demonstrates that the relatively few studies which have measured both constructs have found little relation between feelings of personal identity

and reference group orientation.

In the last ten to fifteen years, studies of black children's self-concept or self-esteem have tended to use measures of personal identity rather than of reference group orientation. Since these measures are often written personality inventories the children studied are typically older than those studied using the simple projective techniques like doll choice. Reviews of these more recent studies have generally concluded the blacks show the same or possibly higher levels of self-esteem as whites (Cross, 1980; Epps, 1978; Gordon, 1980; St. John, 1975; Taylor, 1976). Stephan's (1978) review of this area qualifies this conclusion by pointing to a suggestive age trend. Specifically, he found some tendency for studies conducted with elementary school children to show relatively low self-esteem on the part of black children whereas those conducted with secondary school students suggested just the opposite.

My purpose in the preceding paragraphs has not been to examine definitively work on black self-esteem or self-concept. Research on these constructs is voluminous and involves complex methodological and conceptual issues which I have chosen to ignore. (See Cross, 1980; Epps, 1978; Gordon, 1976, 1980; Hare, 1977; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1971; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976; Wylie, 1974). Rather my goal has been to suggest that the attention directed towards the issue of desegregation and self-esteem may have been out of proportion to the problem, at least in recent decades and possibly earlier. It does seem likely on a logical basis that a state enforced system of segregation might well undermine the personal and group self-regard of those subject to such a system. However, recent studies, at least, suggest that lack of self-esteem is not a major problem for today's black children. Furthermore there is no strong reason to believe that desegregation under the conditions which many black children have experienced would automatically increase self-esteem or regard for their own group. For example, Hare (1977) argues that one might expect to find short term increase in personal and academic anxiety associated with desegregation since many black children enter somewhat hostile environments and/or ones which provide increased academic competition.

The major reviews of school desegregation and black self-concept or self-esteem conducted during the last decade generally agree in concluding that desegregation has no clear-cut consistent impact on self-esteem (Epps, 1975; 1978; Stephan, 1978; St. John, 1975; Weinberg, 1977). For example, one of the most recent reviews cited a total of twenty studies of black self-esteem (Stephan, 1978). Five of these found that self-esteem was higher in blacks in segregated schools and the remaining fifteen suggested no statistically significant impact of desegregation. Although some of the other reviews, most notably Weinberg (1977), present a somewhat more positive view of the situation, none claim a consistent positive effect of desegregation on black self-esteem. Although there are almost no data available to test this proposition directly, Epps' (1975) suggestion that desegregation is likely to have a very varied effect on self-esteem depending on the specific experiences which students have seems eminently sensible.

### **The Effect of School Desegregation on Intergroup Attitudes and Behavior**

As previously indicated, the lion's share of the research on the effect of school desegregation has focused on its impact on academic achievement scores on standardized tests. However, a fairly large body of research has also addressed the issue of its impact on intergroup relations, most especially on interracial attitudes. Although many of the parties concerned with desegregated schools tend to be relatively uninterested in how interracial schooling affects intergroup relations, there are some compelling arguments in favor of giving more thought to the matter. First, the fact is that much social learning occurs whether or not it is planned. Hence, an interracial school cannot choose to have no effect on intergroup relations. It can only choose whether the effect will be planned or unplanned. Even a laissez-faire policy concerning intergroup relations conveys a message -- the message that either school authorities see no serious problem with relations as they have developed or that they do not feel that the nature of intergroup relations is a legitimate concern for an educational institution. So those who argue that schools should not attempt to influence intergroup relations miss the fundamental fact that whether or not they consciously try to influence such relations, schools are extremely likely to do so in one way or another.

Because of the pervasive residential segregation in our society, students frequently



have their first relatively intimate and extended interracial experiences in schools. Hence, whether racial hostility and stereotyping grow or diminish may be critically influenced by the particular experiences students have there. While there may still be considerable argument about whether the development of close interracial ties should be a high priority in this country, there is a growing awareness of the societal costs of intergroup hostility and stereotyping. It is clear that under many conditions interracial contact can lead to increased intergroup hostility. Hence, unless interracial schools are carefully planned there is the very real possibility that they will exacerbate the very social tensions and hostilities that many initially hoped they would diminish.

A number of trends all suggest the importance of turning from an almost exclusive concentration on the academic outcome of schooling and focusing at least some attention on non-academic outcomes such as intergroup relations. First, as previously mentioned, the long held assumption that academic achievement is the major determinant of occupational success has been seriously questioned. Hence, numerous investigators have studied non-academic personal characteristics such as interpersonal competence (White, 1968) or system awareness (Tomlinson & TenHouten, 1972) which appear to be related to occupational success and which may well be influenced by the schooling one receives. Second, the ability to work effectively with out-group members would seem to be an increasingly important skill in a pluralistic society which is striving to overcome a long history of discrimination in education and employment. Third, Jencks et al. (1972) as well as others have suggested that more attention should be paid to structuring schools so that they are reasonably pleasurable environments for students. This viewpoint emphasizes that in addition to being agencies which prepare students for future roles, schools are also the environments in which many people spend nearly one third of their waking hours for a significant portion of their lives. This line of argument suggests that even if positive or negative interracial experiences do not cause change in interracial behaviors and attitudes outside the school situation, positive relationships within the school setting may be of some value.

Finally, there is the possibility that social relations between students in interracial schools may effect their academic achievement and their occupational success (Crain,

1970; Katz, 1964; McPartland & Crain 1980; Pettigrew, 1967; Rosenberg and Simmons, 1971; U. S. Commission on Civil Right, 1967). For example, Katz's (1964) work suggests that the academic performance of blacks may be markedly impaired in biracial situations which pose a social threat. Katz argues that hostility or even indifference from whites is likely to distract black children from their work and to create anxiety which interferes with efficient learning. He also argues that social acceptance of black children by white children will tend to increase black children's academic motivation if the whites are performing better than the blacks as is often the case. There are studies which suggest that interracial social acceptance does not necessarily lead to improved academic performance by blacks (Maruyama & Miller, 1979, 1980). For example Patchen (1982) found that as high school age blacks had, on the average, more friendly contact with white peers, their average academic effort increased but that neither their average grades nor achievement scores were noticeably influenced. Yet it seems reasonable to argue that a very negative interracial atmosphere might well lead to a decline in achievement for white and black students alike. A massive NIE (1978) sponsored study on violence in American schools found that around 4% of a large sample of American high school students reported having stayed home from school in the previous month because they were afraid. The study suggests that, in general, desegregated schools have only slightly higher levels of violence than other schools. Nonetheless, if the interracial atmosphere were particularly tense in a school, the students might well respond by staying home just as they respond to other sources of fear. Such absenteeism, if prolonged and widespread, could hardly help but have an adverse impact on students' achievement. Indeed Patchen (1982) found a small but statistically significant relation between fear of peers and academic achievement for black and white students alike.

Although the impact of desegregation on intergroup relations is far less researched than the impact of desegregation on academic achievement, there is a sizable body of research on this and closely related topics. This research can be roughly grouped into three basic categories. First, there are numerous studies which do things like (a) compare the attitudes of students in a segregated school to those of students in a similar desegregated school, or (b) look at changes in student attitudes and behavior associated with the length of time children have been desegregated. Such studies generally give

relatively little information about the nature of the schools studied. Rather, they tend to talk in terms of assessing "the effect" of desegregation, frequently assuming implicitly that desegregation is an independent variable which has been operationalized similarly in a wide variety of circumstances. Such studies often contain analyses which examine the impact of student background variables like race or sex on reactions to desegregation. However, they generally do not directly address the impact of specific policies or programs on students. Thus, for example, these studies are unlikely to try to relate characteristics of the schools to student outcomes.

The second basic type of research in this area consists of large correlational studies which attempt to relate a wide range of school policies and practices to particular outcomes. One well known study of this type is Forehand, Ragosta and Rock (1976). Also widely cited is the substantial body of work by Hallinan and her colleagues concerning the impact of a variety of classroom characteristics, such as classroom racial composition and size, on intergroup friendship (Hallinan, 1982; Hallinan, 1986; Hallinan & Smith, 1985; Hallinan & Teixeira, in press a, in press b). Another major endeavor of this type is Patchen's (1982) work. This research not only explores the impact of a wide variety of school and classroom level variables on student social relations but assess the impact of student personality and background variables as well.

A third type of research in this area investigates the impact of particular very narrowly defined innovations on intergroup relations within desegregated schools. This type of research is generally experimental and allows one to assess with some confidence the result of implementing the specific innovation being studied. The large majority of this work concerns various techniques for inducing cooperation between black and white students on various kinds of academic tasks. (For reviews see Johnson & Johnson, 1974, 1982; Johnson, Johnson & Maruyama, 1983; Sharan, 1980; and Slavin 1983a, 1983b). However, another substantial body of research both demonstrates how the gap in the status associated with the social categories of black and white in our society influences children's interaction patterns and explores ways of mitigating the impact of this status differential (Cohen, 1980; Cohen, Lockheed & Lohman 1976; Cohen & Roper, 1972).

Unfortunately, one type of research which is virtually non-existent is research on the impact of desegregation on actual intergroup behavior. There is an obvious reason for this. As As St. John (1975, p. 65) has pointed out, "Interracial behavior cannot be compared in segregated and integrated settings or before and after desegregation; it can only be examined if the races are in contact." One can compare responses of segregated and desegregated students to attitude measures but one can hardly make meaningful comparisons between the in-school interracial behavior of segregated and desegregated students. In essence this means that studies of behavior are hard pressed to find reasonable control groups.

Yet, I would argue that it is crucial to know more about actual intergroup behavior if we want to understand the impact of school desegregation on intergroup relations. There are a number of reasons for this. Perhaps most importantly, I would contend that individuals' behavior is ultimately more important from a social policy viewpoint than their attitudes or beliefs. Although one might expect a reasonably strong relationship between attitudes and behavior, there is a plethora of research in social psychology which suggests that behavior by no means follows in an automatic and easily predictable way from attitudes (Liska, 1974; Schuman & Johnson, 1976; Wicker, 1969). In fact, one study of a newly desegregated school concluded there although abstract racial stereotypes were intensified, a negative attitudinal outcome, black and white students came to behavior toward each other much more positively as they gained experience with each other (Schofield, 1982). Further, although it is hard to substantiate this conclusion on anything other than logical basis, it seems in some ways obvious that interracial behavior is likely to be more effected by desegregation than intergroup attitudes. Unless a school is completely resegregated internally, the amount of interracial contact has to increase in a desegregated compared to a segregated environment. In contrast, attitudes do not have to change.

Perhaps more important than the quantity of interracial contact is its quality. There is clearly no guarantee that desegregation will promote positive intergroup behavior as the police lines and armed guards which have sometimes been necessary to protect black children in the early stages of desegregation make clear. However, there

are a few relatively recent studies of desegregated schools which suggest that although cross-racial avoidance is common in many situations (Silverman & Shaw, 1973; Schofield, 1982), when cross-race interaction does occur it is usually positive or neutral in nature (Schofield & Francis, 1982; Singleton & Asher, 1977). In sum, it is important to keep in mind in interpreting the implications the following discussion of the research on desegregation and intergroup attitudes that researchers have generally not looked directly at intergroup behavior which may well be more malleable.

As is the case with research on desegregation and academic achievement there have been several reviews within the last decade or so of the first type of research on desegregation and intergroup behavior - that linking desegregation and intergroup attitudes (Amler, 1976; Cohen, 1975; McConahay, 1978; St. John, 1975; Schofield, 1978; Schofield & Sagar, 1983). Such reviews tend to look at both studies of specific desegregation plans and of interracial schools, often without differentiating between them. Several themes reappear time and time again in these previous reviews. The first is dissatisfaction with technical aspects of much of the work. Since many of the specific problems were discussed in an earlier section of this paper, I will not reiterate their points here. However, it is important to recognize the extent of these problems. For example McConahay (1979, p. 1) writes "In my own review of over 50 published and unpublished studies (on desegregation and intergroup relations) done between 1960 and 1978, I did not find even one true experiment and only four of the quasi-experimental studies had enough methodological rigor to make them worth reporting in any detail (Gerard & Miller, 1975; Schofield & Sagar, 1977; Shaw, 1973; Silverman & Shaw, 1973)." This concern with methodology is more than pedantic nitpicking, since poor methodology can either mask real effects or suggest false ones.

Second, the majority of the reviews conclude that the extant research on desegregation and intergroup relations does not allow confident statements that consistent effects exist. In fact, St. John's (1975) review captures the tone of many of the others in suggesting that the most striking feature of the research is the inconsistency of the findings. Many studies suggest that desegregation tends to lead to more positive interracial attitudes (Gardner, Wright, & Dee, 1970; Jansen & Gallagher, 1966; Mann,

1959; Singer, 1966; U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1967). Others suggest precisely the opposite (Barber, 1968; Dentler & Elkins, 1967; Taylor, 1967). Still others suggest that desegregation has a positive effect on the attitudes of white and negative effect on the attitudes of blacks (McWhirt, 1967) or vice versa (Crooks, 1970; Kurokawa, 1971; Webster, 1961). Finally, some like Lombardi (1962) or Trubowitz (1969) suggest no effect at all.

Third, virtually all of the reviews emphasize the wide variety of desegregated and interracial situations covered by the existing literature and the varying age, gender, social class and race of the students studied. Further they go on to point out that given the variation in particular circumstances it is reasonable, indeed almost inevitable, that different instances of desegregation will have varying effects on intergroup relations.

The reviews in this area are also similar to each other in being literary reviews rather than formal meta-analyses. Thus, the most recent of them, Schofield & Sagar, 1983, explored the possibility of advancing the state of our knowledge through formal meta-analytic procedures. In order to explore the feasibility of this task I decided to create a "core" literature out of all the studies cited in previous reviews, plus those culled from searches of relevant data bases like Psychology Abstracts for more recent years. The core literature generated by the procedure included over one hundred references. However, this large number of studies shrank rapidly as items were eliminated for a variety of reasons such as having been conducted before 1960, utilizing college age students or adults as its sample, focusing primarily on methodological issues and the like. Substantial shrinkage was not surprising since in originally compiling the potential core every study of even marginal relevance was listed. However, the rather small number of studies remaining after this elimination process is rather surprising. In fact, after the process of elimination described above only eight published studies and six dissertations remained in the core literature for assessing the effect of desegregation on intergroup relations. Three studies published since the most recent reviews were added to this core, bringing the total to seventeen. However, since many of the studies focused exclusively on black or on white students, the number of studies available on each of these groups is substantially smaller - around eleven. (Readers interested in a detailed



listing of these studies and their characteristics are referred to Schofield and Sagar, 1983).

Careful examination of these studies suggested that it would be unwise, if not impossible, to try to perform any sort of formal meta-analysis. The reasons for this are many. First, these studies supply less information than one might expect. As previously indicated, some of the studies look only at changes in blacks' attitudes and behavior, whereas others look exclusively at whites. (Unlike the achievement reviews which tend to stress changes in black achievement, reviews in this area almost all look at both groups). Still others use measures such as seating patterns which allow one to assess overall changes in intergroup relations but yield little or no information about which group of students is responsible for the changes which occur. Thus, the number of useful studies dwindles still further from the core of seventeen as one tries to assess outcomes for black students. Yet, looking separately at outcomes for whites and blacks is necessary since a number of the studies which do examine outcomes for both groups of students find quite different outcomes for them.

In addition to the fact that there are very few relevant studies available for a meta-analysis, the studies which do exist rarely describe the schools in which they were conducted or the context in which those schools functioned in sufficient detail to make review-generated comparisons of "types of desegregation" possible. For example, almost half of the studies give no indication of whether there were substantial differences in average levels of academic achievement or of socioeconomic status between the black and white students. Similarly, over half make no mention of community reaction to desegregation. Also, fewer than half discuss the presence or absence of any positive steps designed to make desegregation proceed smoothly. Most studies do give some information on whether the desegregation was voluntary, court-ordered, etc. It is of interest that more than one-third of the cases studied involved voluntary desegregation plans whereas only two studies, both conducted in the same southern school district, looked at court-ordered desegregation.

The temptation to make some comparisons between schools desegregated

voluntarily and otherwise is lessened by two factors. First, unless the impact of any one variable such as the presence or absence of a court-order is of virtually overwhelming importance, it may well be hidden by differences in other aspects of the schools for which the meta-analysis has been unable to control because of lack of information or "empty cells" in the comparison design. Second, approximately half of the studies, including both of the studies of court-ordered desegregation, were conducted during the first year of desegregation and a number of these were conducted less than four months after desegregation. This is good reason to believe that conditions during the first year of desegregation are often quite different from those in later years. In some cases, schools make special efforts to make desegregation work which are later dropped when the initial crisis atmosphere abates. In other cases, protest and disruption are very high initially and then diminish over time. In neither case would one expect the changes in students' reactions to each other during the first year to be good predictors of later changes.

Another factor which seriously impedes a useful meta-analysis of these studies is the great variation in the dependent variables from study to study. Some studies have focused on attitudes toward desegregation, others have looked at attitudes toward the racial outgroup and still others have examined friendship choices. Even within these groupings, the actual study designs and dependent variables are so diverse that cumulation is difficult.

Unfortunately, one important thing that the dependent variables utilized in many of these studies have in common is the hidden assumption that intergroup relations cannot improve except at the expense of intragroup relations. The dependent measures used in almost two-thirds of the studies considered for meta-analysis are structured so that improvement in black/white relations can only occur if students begin to choose outgroup members rather than ingroup members. To some extent, this assumption reflects the nature of social reality. For example, generally a student can only sit next to a few others at lunch. If black students begin to sit next to whites more frequently than before they are also likely to sit next to blacks less frequently. However, there is no reason to think that, in general, attitudes towards outgroup members can only improve if

ingroup members are abandoned or less valued than previously. It seems perfectly reasonable to argue that whites might become more accepting of blacks and at the same time not change their attitudes towards other whites or vice-versa. Yet, the dependent measures used in the majority studies are not structured to reflect accurately this type of change. Rather, they are typically "zero-sum" measures which pick up only the changes in outgroup acceptance which occur at the expense of ingroup members. This fact does not, of course, automatically invalidate these studies; but, it does suggest great care in generalizing from them.

### **School Policies and Practices Which Can Influence Intergroup Relations in Desegregated Schools**

Since it seems clear that the impact of desegregation on students' intergroup attitudes and behaviors varies a great deal from situation to situation, a considerable amount of research has been devoted to understanding just which sorts of policies and practices are likely to have constructive outcomes. As previously mentioned, this research includes both experimental work exploring the impact of particular practices and large scale correlational studies. I will not attempt to review or summarize all that material here for two reasons. First it has been done elsewhere fairly recently (Cohen, 1980; Hawley *et al.*, 1979; Miller, 1980; Schofield & Sagar, 1983). Second, the task is somewhat beyond the scope of this paper since the emphasis has been on the outcomes of desegregation for blacks rather than on how one might improve these outcomes. However, it seems important to illustrate the fundamental and crucially important point that the nature of the desegregation experience is vital to its outcomes by discussing two examples of the kinds of school policies and practices which have been shown to effect intergroup relations.

#### **Racial Composition of Classrooms**

The racial composition of classrooms in desegregated schools is generally substantially influenced by the racial composition of the students enrolled in the broader school district. Yet, in drawing up desegregation plans and even in making student assignment decisions within schools, administrators usually have some degree of

flexibility. Thus several researchers including St. John and Lewis (1975), Patchen (1982), and Hallinan (1982) have examined the impact of classroom racial composition on friendly interracial contact.

The work of Hallinan and her colleagues tends to support what Hallinan calls the opportunity hypothesis - the idea that increasing the number of other race peers relative to own race peers in a classroom tends to increase cross-race friendship. Exploring this idea in research with children in the third through seventh grades Hallinan finds clear support for this hypothesis, although it is not confirmed for every group in every study (Hallinan, 1982; Hallinan & Smith, 1985; Hallinan & Teixeira, in press a). The opportunity hypothesis suggests that blacks' interactions with whites will be maximized in heavily white classrooms. However, in such environments whites' interactions with the few available black classmates will be minimal. Thus, according to this perspective a racially balanced environment tends to promote intergroup interactions for both groups as much as is possible without beginning to make one group so scarce that the other group experiences little cross-race interaction.

One of the few other studies which empirically explores the consequences of classroom racial composition both supports and qualifies Hallinan's findings. First Patchen (1982) empirically tests Hallinan's argument that classroom and not school level racial composition is likely to influence interracial interaction rates. He concludes, consistent with her point of view, that the racial make-up of a school's student body as a whole has little consistent association with the intergroup relations experienced by that school's students. However, he also concludes that the racial composition of classrooms is indeed linked to a number of important outcomes. Consistent with Hallinan's work, Patchen finds a statistically significant positive relation between the number of blacks in classrooms with white students and those students' reports of their own friendly contact with blacks. The data for black students show a clear but not statistically significant trend in a parallel direction - with blacks in heavily white classrooms reporting more friendly contact with whites than those in heavily black classrooms.

Patchen (1982) pushed the general idea of exploring the impact of opportunity for

contact on intergroup relations even further by analyzing the impact of interracial physical proximity within the classroom on such relations. Results here were generally consistent with those concerning the effect of class racial proportions. Of course, the meaning of such correlations is muddled somewhat by the possibility that unprejudiced students may choose to sit near other race peers thus leading to a spurious relation between seating proximity and interracial friendliness. However, both internal analyses and data presented on seating assignment practices by Patchen are helpful in suggesting that this explanation is unlikely to account adequately for the relationships found.

Patchen (1982) also goes beyond measuring friendly contact, or friendship choice which Hallinan and her colleagues focus on, to looking at the impact of classroom racial composition on variables such as interracial avoidance, unfriendly contact, change in opinion of other race individuals, and the like. Not surprisingly given this plethora of related but different constructs the results of his study are complex. However, Patchen (1982, p. 147) concludes that overall "Relationships between the races were best among students who attended majority-black classes." Specifically, in such classes attitudes toward other race schoolmates and positive change in opinion about other race individuals were generally greatest. In contrast, when blacks were a small minority avoidance on the part of both groups was fairly common, although blacks did report a lot of friendly interracial contact as one would on the basis of the opportunity hypothesis. Interestingly, Patchen reports that as the size of the black minority rose from 10% to about 50% intergroup relationships generally worsened. He explains this by pointing out that in such settings blacks often felt especially rejected by whites and whites especially threatened by blacks. He argues in the other situations blacks were either such a small minority that they posed little threat to the white status quo or they were in a majority and hence a force to which whites found ways to accommodate.

Although I have focused this section specifically on the issue of classroom racial composition, both Patchen and Hallinan and her colleagues have explored a rich variety of other factors ranging from student background and personality variables to school climate and structure variables which appear to exert independent effects on peer relationships in desegregated schools as well as occasionally moderating the kind of

effects discussed above. Thus readers interested in further exploring such issues are referred to their works cited in this section as well as to reviews in this general area such as Cohen (1980), Miller (1980), and Schofield and Sagar (1983). However, since even a brief discussion of the impact of school policies and practices on intergroup relations would be incomplete without reference to the area which has received by far the greatest share of attention, I will now turn to a consideration of the impact of cooperation on intergroup relations in desegregated schools.

### Cooperative Learning Techniques

There is much evidence suggesting that cooperation can and often does have quite positive effects on interpersonal and intergroup relations. As Worchel (1979, p. 264) points out:

Research has demonstrated that cooperation results in increased communication, greater trust and attraction, greater satisfaction with group production, (and) greater feelings of similarity between group members.

Such evidence has led many theorists and researchers to suggest that inducing cooperation between children from different racial or ethnic groups may well help to foster improved intergroup relations in desegregated schools. Quite a large number of studies suggest that this is indeed the case. In a large correlational study of the relation of various school practices to six different indicators of students' intergroup attitudes and behavior, Slavin and Madden (1979) found that the one practice which showed quite consistent positive effects was assigning black and white students to work together on academic tasks. Similarly, Patchen (1982) found that working with other-race students in task-oriented subgroups facilitated friendly interracial contact. In addition, Damico, Bell-Nathaniel and Green (1981) concluded that students in schools which emphasized teamwork were more likely to have friends of the other race than were students in more traditionally structured schools. Taking a somewhat different approach to this issue, Hallinan and Teixeira (in press a) demonstrate that an emphasis on grades and standardized test scores, which presumably creates a competitive atmosphere, leads to relatively few cross-race friendships whereas an emphasis on student initiative and



enjoyment of their classroom experiences is associated with higher levels of interracial friendship.

However, it seems clear that some types of cooperative situations are more likely to promote positive relations than others. For example, there are studies which suggest that whites working in cooperative groups with blacks respond more positively to their black teammates when the group experiences success than when it fails (Blanchard, Adelman & Cook, 1975, Blanchard & Cook, 1976; Blanchard, Weigel & Cook, 1975). One of these studies suggests that whites show more attraction to a black work partner when he performs competently than when he performs poorly although no parallel phenomenon was observed in the ratings of white partners (Blanchard, Weigel & Cook, 1975). A second similar study conducted with white military personnel as subjects failed to replicate this finding, but it did suggest that relatively competent group members, whatever their race, were more favorably regarded than less competent group members (Mumpower & Cook, 1978). It is easy to see how friction might evolve if children of different achievement levels are required to work together and to share a joint reward for their product. Thus, although the Slavin and Madden study suggests that in general assigning students to work together does have positive effects, it seems important to specify carefully the type of cooperative situation one is speaking about.

There is also evidence that a significant amount of cooperation often does not occur spontaneously between blacks and whites in interracial schools. Reports of voluntary resegregation on the part of students for both social and academic activities are legion (Collins, 1979; Cusick & Ayling, 1973; Gerard, Jackson & Conolley, 1975; Schofield & Sagar, 1977; Silverman & Shaw, 1973). Thus, schools hoping to improve race relations need to adopt strategies designed to promote cooperation. There has been a great deal of experimental research on strategies for promoting cooperation on academic tasks.

Most of the research on cooperative learning techniques for classroom use with academic subject matter has focused on one of five rather similar models. All five techniques have been researched in classroom settings and have books or manuals which

explain their implementation. For further details on these and other techniques readers are referred to Slavin, 1980a, 1983a, 1985; Sharan, 1980; Aronson and Osherow, 1980; and Cook (no date).

In some of these techniques cooperation between students on racially or ethnically mixed teams is induced through task interdependence; that is, no individual child can fulfill his or her assignment without the assistance of others. In other cases cooperative behavior between students is induced through reward interdependence; that is, each child's grade is partially dependent on the success of other group members. Although they differ in many ways, most of these techniques have mechanisms which allow lower achievers to contribute substantially to the attainment of the group goals. In spite of the rather important conceptual differences in the way in which cooperation is induced in the different team learning programs, there is a very noticeable similarity in the outcomes which stem from use of these techniques. The large majority of studies suggest that use of these techniques leads to some improvement in intergroup relations, even if the student teams are used for a small part of the school day for no more than two or three months. In sharp contrast to the evidence with regard to many of the topics discussed in this paper, the research on the impact of cooperative group learning is generally strong, clear, and consistent. It is also noteworthy that quite a bit of research has been done on the academic impact of these strategies. Typically, these studies suggest that the impact is positive, more especially for originally low achieving students (Slavin, 1980b; 1983b).

There is some evidence that cooperation in other spheres at school--most especially extra-curricular activities--also encourages the development of positive intergroup relations. The potential for cooperative involvement in extra-curricular activities to improve intergroup relations is suggested by Jaccard's (1982) work which found that participation in extra-curricular activities had a stronger impact on interracial friendships than almost any of the other numerous variables in his study. Similarly, Hallinan and Teixeira (in press b) report that both black and white students who participate in such activities make more cross-race best friend choices than do students who do not participate. In addition, Slavin and Madden's (1979) found that

participation on integrated athletic teams was one of the few variables they studied which was related to a variety of positive intergroup attitudes and behaviors. The correlational nature of these studies leaves the direction of causality unspecified. Yet, given the clearly demonstrated positive effects of cooperative activity on intergroup relations, it seems reasonable to assume that at least some of the relation stems from the positive impact of joint activity on students' feeling about each other.

A number of studies have suggested that boys in desegregated schools engage in more positive interaction across racial lines than girls (Schofield & Francis, 1982; Jansen and Gallagher, 1966; Schofield, 1982; Schofield & Sagar, 1977; Singleton & Asher, 1977). One of the many possible factors contributing to this phenomenon is the greater involvement of boys in extra-curricular activities, most especially sports. For example, St. John (1964) found that boys in a desegregated school were more active in extra-curricular activities than girls, primarily because of their involvement with athletics teams. Although there has recently been considerable controversy about increasing the involvement of girls in athletics, it is clear that boys' intramural and extramural athletics are still generally much more important in the social life of schools than are girls' athletics. Thus, boys often have opportunities for cooperative endeavors in a highly valued sphere which are either not open to girls or available but not highly valued. Indeed, one longitudinal study of a racially mixed high school football team clearly demonstrates the positive effects of cooperative involvement in team athletics on intergroup relations between boys, although it suggests that these effects are quite situation specific (Miracle, 1981).

Although team sports are a very visible cooperative extra-curricular activity, they are far from the only ones which have the potential for improving intergroup relations. Activities like the school newspaper, band, dramatic club and choir also provide an opportunity for students to work together toward shared goals. The important question appears to be how to insure that such activities, including sports teams, do not become segregated. It seems unwise to argue that all types of students should participate in all clubs in exact relation to their proportion in the student body. Cultural differences between ethnic groups may lead to differences in interests which would naturally be

reflected in differential rates of enrollment in some activities. Yet, often it seems that the resegregation of extra-curricular activities is much more than a reflection of different interests. Rather, once an activity is seen as belonging to a particular group, members of other groups who would like to join begin to feel uncomfortable and unwelcome (Collins, 1979; Scherer & Slawski, 1979). Such resegregation of extra-curricular activities is especially unfortunate since many of these activities present good opportunities for cooperative contact which differences in academic performance may not impede as much as they sometimes impede smooth cooperation in the classroom.

In summary, there is substantial evidence suggesting that cooperation in the pursuit of shared goals can have a positive effect on relations between students in desegregated schools. There are a number of well-researched techniques available for promoting cooperation in the classroom. Although the impact of cooperation on non-academic tasks has not been as closely studied, it too seems conducive to positive relations. Further, it is clear that the resegregation of widely valued extra-curricular activities like athletics can lead to tensions and resentment. Thus, strategies which are effective in encouraging cooperative contact in such activities seem likely to lead to more positive intergroup relations.

### Conclusions

The Brown decision which laid the basis for the dismantling of de jure segregation did not come quickly or easily. It was the culmination of many decades of challenge to enforced segregation of the schools. Neither did implementation of the historic decision follow quickly on the heels of its issuance. Continued legal battles, continued political pressure, and great courage on the part of many black students and parents involved in desegregation efforts were required to make the law a reality. The Brown decision abolished a policy which was a standing insult to black Americans. Thus its symbolic value should not fail to be recognized. It also set in motion the processes by which the proportion of black students in 90-100% minority schools was cut almost in half. Nonetheless, it has not noticeably influenced the education of millions of black children who are now in racially isolated schools. Further, unless new legal precedents are set additional marked declines in the proportion of black students in all minority schools are

unlikely. In fact, in numerous large urban areas which house a good proportion of the black population in the U.S. racial isolation in the schools is increasing.

What have been the outcomes flowing from the desegregation which has been achieved over the past three decades? First, research suggests that desegregation has had some positive effect on the reading skills of black youngsters. The effect is not huge. Neither does it occur in all situations. However, a measurable effect does seem to occur on the average. Such is not the case with mathematics skills which seem generally unaffected by desegregation. Second, there is some evidence that desegregation may help to break what can be thought of as a generational cycle of segregation and racial isolation. Although research in this topic is scant and often marred by unavoidable flaws, evidence has begun to accumulate that desegregation may favorably influence important adult outcomes such as college graduation, income, and employment patterns. The measured effects are weak and somewhat dependent on factors like region and gender. Yet they are worth consideration.

The evidence regarding the role of desegregation on intergroup relations is generally held to be inconclusive and inconsistent. That is, some studies find increasing racial hostility and stereotyping on the part of students, black and white alike, whereas others find increasing tolerance. However, three additional points need to be mentioned here which are not adequately addressed by the research literature. First, the abolishing of dual systems and the changes required in systems found to have engaged in other sorts of de jure segregation of necessity have changed certain important aspects of black/white relations in this country. The existence and legal sanctioning of governmental policies and practices intended to segregate blacks were and are in and of themselves statements about race relations. Even if no other specific benefits were to flow from the Brown decision, in my view at least, the abolishing of this sort of governmentally sanctioned "badge of inferiority" was an important advance in intergroup relations. Second, as discussed earlier, studies of desegregation and intergroup relations have not addressed the question of how intergroup behavior has changed. They have focused almost exclusively on attitudes because "pre" measures of attitudes are available whereas there is no feasible way to measure intergroup behavior in a segregated society. Yet there are

indications that desegregated schooling can provide students with valuable behavioral experience which prepares them to function in a pluralistic society. In fact, some studies suggest that this occurs even when racial attitudes become more negative. Finally, we are beginning to have some idea of the school policies and practices which influence the way in which desegregation effects intergroup relations. It is clear that desegregation can be implemented in very different ways and that these differences have marked and often predictable effects on intergroup relations. Seeing the desegregation process itself as the beginning of interracial schooling and focusing on the actual nature of the desegregated experience should make it possible to improve present results in that realm.



### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>The discussion in this section is based on Schofield, J. W. (1978) School desegregation and intergroup relations in D. Bar-Tal & L. Saxe, (Eds.), Social psychology of education: Theory and research (pp. 329-363). New York: Halsted Press.

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